Claims

1.   A method for providing a search result list, the method
comprising:

receiving a search request from a searcher;

in a database of search listings, each search listing being associated
with an advertiser and including at least one search term and
a bid amount modifiably bid by the advertiser, identifying
search listings having search terms generating a match with
the search request;

selecting according to bid amount no more than a predetermined
number of identified search listings for display to the searcher;

arranging the identified search listings for display in a random order
as the search result list; and

communicating the search result list to the searcher.

2.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

changing the random order upon subsequent receipt of the search
request.

3.   The method of claim 2 further comprising:

changing the random order periodically.

4.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

detecting a change in content of the identified search listings for
display; and

in response, changing the random order.

5.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

detecting an increased bid amount of a search listing among the
identified search listings for display; and

in response, changing the random order.

6.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

applying an algorithm to the probability of displaying a respective
search listing of the identified search listings in a particular

location in the search result list to reduce the randomness of
the ordering of the search result list.

7. A method for providing a search result list, the method
comprising:
receiving a search request from a searcher;
in a database of search listings, each search listing being associated
with an advertiser and including at least one search term and
a bid amount modifiably bid by the advertiser, identifying
search listings having search terms generating a match with
the search request;
selecting according to bid amount no more than a predetermined
number of identified search listings for display to the searcher;
arranging as the search result list the identified search listings for
display in a random order weighted according to the bid
amount associated with each respective identified search
listing; and
communicating the search result list to the searcher.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
selecting a first respective search listing for a first-displayed location
in the search result list according to a bid amount-weighted
random drawing, leaving remaining search listings; and
repetitively selecting a next respective search listing for a next-
displayed location in the search result list according to a bid
amount-weighted random drawing among the remaining
search listings until the search result list is fully populated.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the identified search listings
are arranged in the search result list in a random order
weighed by bid amount associated with each respective
identified search listing, the influence of bid amount being
controlled by one or more predetermined parameters.

10. A method for providing a search result list, the method comprising:

receiving a search request from a searcher;

in a database of search listings, each search listing being associated with an advertiser and including at least one search term and a bid amount modifiably bid by the advertiser, identifying search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request;

selecting according to bid amount no more than a predetermined number of identified search listings for display to the searcher;

arranging as the search result list the identified search listings for display in a random order weighted according to the bid rank associated with each respective identified search listing; and

communicating the search result list to the searcher.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

selecting a first respective search listing for a first-displayed location in the search result list according to a bid rank-weighted random drawing, leaving remaining search listings; and repetitively selecting a next respective search listing for a next-displayed location in the search result list according to a bid rank-weighted random drawing among the remaining search listings until the search result list is fully populated.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the identified search listings are arranged in the search result list in a random order weighed by bid rank associated with each respective identified search listing, the influence of bid rank being controlled by one or more predetermined parameters.

13. A method for providing a search result list, the method comprising:

receiving a search request from a searcher;

in a database of search listings, each search listing being associated with an advertiser and including at least one search term and

a bid amount modifiably bid by the advertiser, identifying
search listings having search terms generating a match with
the search request;

selecting according to bid amount a variable number of identified

5   search listings for display to the searcher, the number of
selected identified search listings being a function of the bid
amounts for the identified search listings;

arranging the identified search listings for display as the search
result list; and

10   communicating the search result list to the searcher.